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"THE U.S. HAS A BETTER COORDINATED INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM THAN ANY NATION IN THE WORLD" — KENT

FRIDAY FLASHES—JULY 25TH

From Address by

THE HONORABLE SHERMAN KENT

CIA's former Director for the Office of National Estimates and Chairman of the Board of National Estimates

"MANY FORMERLY thought that we had a national intelligence establishment that was more than it is worth. Yet if over the past 20 years government hadn't directed our intelligence organizations to take risks, the cost would have been some thousands times greater.

We've lived in relative security since World War II and this is largely ascribable to the U.S. intelligence performance. Universal Requirement

What is United States intelligence? The intelligence calling is absolutely enormous. Even so, I'm only talking of the small portion.

In Washington there is what is generally termed the 'intelligence community.' It consists of the C.I.A., the intelligence components of the Department of Defense, State Department, and the Atomic Energy Commission; and the F.B.I.

All these organizations are located in or near Washington, D.C. All have their own intelligence requirements and all make contributions to national intelligence as well.

Intelligence is a requirement for all states of the world, past, present and future.

Road Maps to Espionage Nets

The institution which makes these various organizations a 'community' is the Director of Central Intelligence, presently Richard Helm.

In addition to being the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency he is also the intelligence community's presiding officer. No other nation has such a post.

Weekly meetings of the heads of the nation's intelligence organizations are chaired by the Director of Central Intelligence. This body is termed the National Intelligence Board.

The Director presides over decisions as to which intelligence work will be done, by whom, and which organization should pay for the effort.

Quality of the Central Intelligence directors in past years has been very high. The system has worked well.

The United States has better intelligence coordination at top levels than any other nation in the world. The director will sometimes take a position and others on the Board can then dissent, or otherwise.

Not one of these organizations, except for the F.B.I., has any domestic interests or intelligence.

How do U.S. intelligence organizations do this job? They collect large amounts of information on a wide array of topics—economic, social, political, and military.

Intelligence activities may range from buying a road map to running an espionage network.

'I Want the Facts'

Lastly there is a group of research people who sift all the information so gathered. These people are as important as those in the field. They do a full 50% of the work at least.

How good a job does our intelligence do? A short answer, from a biased source, it does a good job. But how good is good?

There is an answer in the nature of furnishable intelligence. First we have information about knowable things—basic intelligence. This is fairly simple stuff for an intelligence organization. It consists of facts.

Five Cubic Yards

With modern technology a host of hitherto unknowable facts are at our fingertips. It's sometimes said by consumer, 'I don't want your interpretation about this missile shot, I want facts.' And we could give him about five cubic yards of material ranging from graphs to squiggles from an oscilloscope.

But there must be a new echelon of analysts to translate line, symbol and picture into useable data. The consumer would not be able to use that five cubic yards of information otherwise.

For example, someone in the Soviet Union knows how many missiles would go if the Soviet leader would press that red button. We don't know this information but we do know many things surrounding that red button. And we must estimate to make an analysis from this situation.

Intelligence is required to answer the questions no matter what the intelligence communities' desires might be.

We must often cast analysis in terms of probability. Early U-2 pictures proved only the estimates of a lot of things we knew about. They also revealed things we had no knowledge of.

For us in the intelligence community this is fine, but for the consumers of intelligence it's always short of what is desired. A policy maker can't be more satisfied with an estimate than you are with the last stock forecast.

Why So Secret?

No matter how good the information is it doesn't detract from the agony of decision.

Why are intelligence organizations so secretive? There are many things that intelligence can't talk about if it's doing its talking. Consequently it doesn't do much talking.

Intelligence communities do submit themselves to exhaustive questions and answers—to those with constituted authority, the bosses.

We must protect the people who ask the questions and protect our sources. We can't give away policy considerations before the decisions are made.

During World War II one man was studying the German oil situation. From newspapers, analysis of Lisbon train movements were revealed where there was no apparent need for such movements.

Following this gentleman's analysis the British flew a reconnaissance plane over and found a new refinery which no one knew about.

Acts of Madness

How do we compare to the competition? We're the best in the world.

In response to a question every piece of information and every intelligence body will be focused on the question to give the best answer possible.

Other nations might give such questions to a particular department which then answers without the benefit of intelligence information.

Or they may give it to an intelligence body which then answers without describing the validity of the source.

One-time famous intelligence operative General Orloff mentioned in his book that intelligence organizations should only 'put faith in espionage' because only those documents stolen by a secret agent had any validity.

How could he then vouch for the source of the document? Could it be the product of a disgruntled under-secretary? This would be an act of madness if accepted without any idea of the validity involved.

In contrast United States intelligence passes decisions and estimates on thoughtful analysis and rigorous work." (DSR)

Answers to Written Questions from Floor:

Q: (L. P. Elliott) Changes and improvements in intelligence techniques since WW II? A: Yes! Mainly in collection technology.

Q: How activities of CIA and FBI coordinated? A: Only common area is counter espionage. CIA overseas; FBI, U.S.

Q: Each of the Armed Services have its own separate intelligence service? A: In early 1960's Defense Intelligence Agency formed. Combines armed services' intelligence.

Q: Effectiveness of Soviet intelligence? A: Obviously USSR doesn't tell us about themselves, much of what we know is through "friendly" intelligence agencies.

Q: CIA looked bad at Bay of Pigs. Anything been changed, is it better? A: Yes. Allen Dulles and some of his high aides left office. CIA will never get into another military situation that isn't plausibly deniable.

Q: (Stuart A. Forsyth) How balance need for national security and public's interest in CIA activities? A: Public attitude should be "this is sad state of affairs but we must live with it." From duly authorized authority.

Q: Recruitment of CIA personnel more difficult than in past? A: Like all government agencies, CIA has its problems. (MJB)